THE POSITION OF JOHN PRESTON, *Doctor in* DIVINITY, SOMETIMES M^R. OF EMANUEL *COLLEDGE* IN CAMBRIDGE, *And Preacher at* Lincolns-Inn,

Concerning the Irresistiblenesse of CONVERTING GRACE.

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The Poſition of Dr. Preſton, *Maſter of* Emanuel *Colledge in* Cambridge,

Concerning the Irreſiſtibleneſſe of Converting Grace.

IT is often profeſſed by *Arminius*, that he attributes as much unto Grace as ever any other, that there is nothing ſaid by others concerning the efficacy of Grace, which is not alſo affirmed by himſelfe; yea, that he acknowledges whatſoever that be thought or imagined for the opening and ſetting forth of the power of Grace, and that therefore he is miſ-reported by thoſe that render him injurious to the grace of God, and one that attributes too much to free-will. You will finde in *Auguſtine*, that *Pelagius* profeſſes as much concerning himſelfe. And yet in the mean time, This is true, that, if *Arminius* his opinion ſtand good, all this Efficacy of Grace, which he ſo much magnifies and amplifies in words, depends on the will of man, in regard that by vertue of its native liberty, it may receive or reject this grace, uſe it or not uſe it, render it effectuall or vain. Neither can it be otherwiſe, unleſſe we aboliſh the liberty of the Will, and deſtroy thoſe properties, which are inſeparable from the Nature of it.

Leſt that any ſhould ſuſpect that I faſten upon him an opinion, which is not his, let his words be read, which may be found in a Treatiſe intituled *Decl. ſent. Arm.* pag. 181. and they are theſe, *Grace* (ſaith Arm.) *is ſo deſcribed in Scripture, as that it may be*

reſiſted,

reſiſted, receeived in vaine, that man may hinder his aſſent unto it, deny to co-operate with it, and therefore an irreſiſtible power, and working, is not to be attributed unto Grace. Now, if *Arminius* in theſe words do not pull downe what he ſeemed to build in the former, let others judge.

I know the *Arminians* cavill about the word *Irreſiſtible*, uſed by *Calvin*, and other of our Divines, and cry out, That by this opinion of ours, men are turned into ſtocks, acting not at all in the work of Converſion, but, as ſtones, are acted and moved by another; yea, that men doe not believe, but God in man repents and believes.

But you ſhall eaſily ſee how falſly theſe things are charged upon us, and how truly we ſay that *Arminius* derogates more from the grace of God, than the Jeſuites; If you will give me leave faithfully to ſet downe their opinions, and briefly to compare them together: For in theſe foure things ſhall my Diſcourſe conſiſt. Firſt, I will repeat the Opinion of our Adverſaries. 2. I will explain our own Opinion. 3. I will adde Reaſons for the confirmation of our Opinion. 4. I will anſwer the Objections, at leaſt, one or two of the chief of them, whereby our opinion is oppoſed.

As to the firſt, Some *Jeſuites* affirme, That Sufficient grace, as to means is given to all, even to Reprobates; but Effectuall grace, which ſhall certainly and infallibly attaine its end, is given onely to the Elect. If we aske wherein they place the efficacy of this Grace; they anſwer, Not in a phyſicall determination of the Will, but in a morall perſwaſion, and that not of any kinde, but congruous (as they call it) that is a perſwaſion offered with ſuch circumſtances of Place, Perſon, and Time, as to which, God (who from everlaſting knowes all the inclinations of the Will) foreſees the will ſhall certainely and infallibly yeild unto. They diſtinguiſh therefore between Sufficient and Effectuall grace, that is, thoſe whom God hath choſen unto life, by vertue of that abſolute Decree he intends to offer unto them, not onely ſufficient perſwaſion, but at a fit time, when he knowes that the perſon ſo called, will undoubtedly obey the call of God: but thoſe whom he hath not choſen, to them alſo he offers perſwaſion ſufficient, but not at a time ſo

fit,

fit, and when he certainly foreſees that they will not obey the divine calling.

From whence we gather, that this is the opinion of the *Jeſuites*.

1. That effectuall vocation doth follow, and not precede the decree of election, and conſequently, that the decree is abſolute, not conditionall.

2. That the ſame and equall grace is not granted to the converted and unconverted; but that which is given to the elect is alwayes more effectuall, although not in reſpect of it ſelfe, yet in reſpect of the ſuitableneſſe, which it hath unto the will of the man to be converted.

3. That all to be converted, ſhall be certainly and infallibly converted, and that onely by the power of *Converting Grace*; but others certainely alſo, and infallibly, ſhall not be converted, not onely becauſe they will not, but in regard of the defect of congruity in the grace offered. Which Grace, although as to the ſubſtance of it (as they ſay) is ſufficient, ſo that by the help of it men might be converted (if they would) yet as to the circumſtances it is not ſufficient, becauſe it is not offered at a ſuitable time. For thus *Suarez*: Morall perſwaſion, though abundant, is not ſufficient. A phyſicall or reall determination is too much, for it taketh away liberty, but the whole efficacy of grace conſiſts in a Certainty, Congruity, or Conveniency.

But the *Arminians*, although they ſeem to aſſert, that the beginning, progreſſe, and perfection of every good work, is to be attributed unto Grace, ſo that no man (without preventing, accompanying, and following Grace) is able to think, will, or act any thing that is good: yet when they plead, that all this is done after a manner reſiſtible, ſo as to leave it in the power of the Will, to uſe or not to uſe that grace unto converſion. It is apparent, that they do onely in pretence, and not heartily and really attribute theſe things unto grace. This will eaſily appeare by a diſtinct opening of the opinion of the *Arminians*.

1. Firſt they grant, That the Underſtanding is irreſiſtibly illuminated by Divine Grace.

2. That the Affections alſo are excited and renewed by the ſame Grace irreſiſtibly.

3. That the Will is alſo ſo ſtirred up by aſſiſting Grace, that it is now diſintangled, whereas before it was incumbred; now freed, whereas it was before bound; now awakened, whereas before it was aſleepe. But that the Will is renewed, and by a reall operation inclined unto good, by God; or that any quality, or habit of holineſſe is infuſed into the Will, by vertue of which it is inclined more to good works than to evill, the *Arminians* utterly deny. Becauſe, that if any of this were granted, the naturall liberty of the Will (as they ſuppoſe) were deſtroyed; unto which liberty they hold it eſſentiall that the Will be free to act, or not to act, when all things required unto its acting are in being. Let their very words be ſeene, *The Confer. at Hague*, pag. 298. Into the Minde (ſay they) is infuſed a habit of knowledge, into the Affections holineſſe is infuſed, as Hope, or Feare, *&c.* But ſuch an infuſion cannot be made into the Will, becauſe of its nature, freedome to will good or evil. Hence (as they ſay) Firſt there is a morall perſwaſion ſtirred up in the Underſtanding, but by the help of Preventing Grace: Secondly, To this perſwaſion the Will may aſſent, but by the help of Concomitant Grace: And thirdly, This aſſent may be produced into act, but by vertue of Subſequent Grace. But to all this they diligently annex this caution, although the Will can do none of theſe things without the help of Grace, yet it is in the power of the Will to reſiſt this Grace, to put it by, to neglect it or caſt it away, if it pleaſe. Neither can it be otherwiſe, if the naturall properties of the Will be preſerved. Thus is the ſtate of the queſtion explained by *Joannes Arnoldus*, againſt *Bogerman*, p. 263. allowing all thoſe which God uſeth in working our converſion; yet converſion it ſelfe doth ſo far remaine in our power, that we may not be converted.

This opinion being aſſerted, the *Arminians* are conſtrained to defend theſe Poſitions more falſe than thoſe of the Jeſuits.

1. They defend a conditionall Decree grounded on the præſcience of Faith, for if the Will, ſuppoſing all the actions of God toward it, may convert or not, believe or not; it is neceſſary that God firſt foreſee who will believe, and who not, before he can chooſe ſome to life, and appoint others to wrath. But the

Jeſuites

Jeſuites hold the Decree to be abſolute, and Faith to be an effect or fruit following thereupon.

2. The Jeſuites grant that more grace, as to the manner of diſpenſing it, is beſtowed upon thoſe who are converted, than upon thoſe who are not. The Arminians contrariwiſe, that more grace (as to the manner) is often conferred upon the unconverted than the converted.

3. Hence alſo the Arminians do ordinarily caſt the principle of Converſion in part, upon the will of man (whatſoever they profeſſe in words to the contrary) whereas the Jeſuites attribute it wholly to the good pleaſure and will of God.

4. Hence alſo the Arminians hold, That converting and quickning Grace is not peculiar to converted and choſen Ones, but to be common alſo unto others. But the Jeſuites confeſſe, That congruous or ſuitable vocation (in which they place the efficacy of Grace) is peculiar unto the Elect.

5. The Jeſuites judge, That all thoſe, whom the Holy-Ghoſt intended to convert, are certainely and infallibly converted. The Arminians utterly deny it; whence they are commonly bold to ſay, That the Holy-Ghoſt may be reſiſted, even then when it works upon a man with intention of his converſion.

Theſe things being premiſed, I will now briefly lay downe what our opinion is: But that our judgement may be throughly underſtood; we muſt know that the converſion of a man is perfected in theſe four degrees:

1. God infuſeth into the whole Soule, and ſo into the Will, a habit or quality of holineſſe, renewing it, and making it, of evill good, of unwilling willing; by which meanes, that which belongs to the nature of the Will, is preſerved entire, but that which was corrupt is rectified.

2. From this quality ſo infuſed, preſently there ariſe in the Will, certaine imperfect inclinations, preventing the notice of reaſon, like unto thoſe which the School-men call the very firſt Motions of the heart: For by theſe the will doth not compleatly, and effectually will that which is good, but is onely initially, and incompleatly inclined to thoſe good workes which pleaſe God, from whence ſuch acts may be called, not ſo much willings, as wiſhings and wouldings.

3. Thoſe inclinations are preſented as an object to the underſtanding, which weighs them, debates them, takes counſel about them; and at length, when it hath by its ultimate, and concluſive dictates, confirmed them, propounds them to the will as to be choſen.

4. After thoſe initiall inclinations, ariſing from infuſed Grace, have paſſed the cenſure of the underſtanding, and are allowed by the preceding judgement thereof; then at length doth the Will put forth a compleat and effectual willingneſſe, from which converſion immediately doth follow, or rather that very willing is the converſion of a man unto God. In theſe four things is the converſion of man accompliſhed:

1. Here firſt the reception of the habit of Grace infuſed is indeed irreſiſtible, but neither free nor voluntary, for the Will is meerly paſſive in the receiving, and therefore exerciſes not its freedome.

2. Secondly, The inclination ariſing or flowing from Grace is irreſiſtible, for it proceedes from the Will, formed and endued with Grace, not in a moral, but phyſicall way: that is, not in a way of perſwaſion, but reall operation: But it is voluntary, for it is produced by the Will in an active way; yet it is not free, becauſe one of the requiſites to freedom, which is the foregoing judgement of the underſtanding, is yet wanting.

3. Thirdly, The judgement of the underſtanding, concerning this initial and imperfect Inclination, is irreſiſtible, For the underſtanding being enlightened by Divine Grace, doth irreſiſtibly and infallibly approve this Inclination, and it is ſo far free as the Underſtanding is capable of freedom.

4. Fourthly, When the Underſtanding hath put forth its laſt and concluſive dictate, then the Will (as I ſaid) puts forth a compleat and executive willing, which is actuall Converſion unto God: And this Willing is both irreſiſtible and free, and ſo Converſion it ſelfe is both free and irreſiſtible. 1. It is irreſiſtible, becauſe it neceſſarily followes the reall Inclination of the Will preceding, and the laſt dictate of the Underſtanding approving and confirming it. It is alſo moſt properly free, for it hath thoſe things which are required unto liberty, ſeeing the Will therein is not paſſive, but active. 2. It is not brought forth,

but

but in the way of morall perſwaſion; that is, not without the preceding judgement of the underſtanding, weighing on each part what is beſt to be done; for every active and compleat Willing, which hath had ſuch a deliberation and determination of the Underſtanding, concerning an object offered, going before it, muſt be called truly and properly free. And for that definition of freedome whereby that is ſaid to be free, which ſuppoſing all things requiſite to action, may either act or not; it is a definition ſetled only in the brains of the Jeſuits; and neither hath foundation among the Fathers, nor the antient Philoſophers, nor yet among the more ancient School-men, whom yet *Suarez* endeadevours to wreſt to the maintenance of his opinion.

So have you our opinion; according to which, a man is converted irreſiſtibly, and yet freely, which that you may yet more fully underſtand, theſe Axiomes follow from it, which are contrary to thoſe of the *Jeſuites* and *Arminians*.

1. We do not ſay, that Free-will, or the faculty of the Will, as to ſpirituall things, is half alive and half dead, as the *Arminians* would have it, *Confer. Hag.* p. 300. or that it is like the power of moving in one who is bound in fetters; or as the faculty of ſeeing in one who is ſhut up in a dark place, as the Papiſts ſay: But we hold, That the faculty of the Will, as it reſpects a truly ſpirituall good, is wholly extinct, as the power of life in a dead man of motion in a ſlaine man, of ſight in him whoſe eyes are put out.

2. They alſo defend, That the Will is onely ſtirred up by morall or aſſiſting Grace, knocking at the doore of it, and admoniſhing it, not that it is changed by habituall Grace, healing and renewing it: For theſe are their words, *There is no reaſon why morall Grace, that is morally perſwading, may not make a naturall man ſpirituall.* But we ſuppoſe, that the will is quickned and renewed by the infuſion of habituall Grace, that is of a new quality imprinted on the Will, which is as an inward principle enlivening and changing the Will, from whence all good inclinations and operations do proceed.

3. They hold, That the Will is otherwiſe concerned in Converſion, than in an active way, We maintain, that the Will in the firſt act of Converſion is partly paſſive, and partly active, that is,

firſt

firſt Paſſive, then Active, and ſo it worketh together with God, not partly by a naturall ability, and partly by a ſupernaturall ſtrength, received from grace, paſſing by, but by vertue of a power wholly ſupernaturall, which is conferred by infuſed and quickning grace, according to that of *Auguſtine*, To will, is of our ſelves, but to will well, both partly and wholly, is of grace.

4. The Arminians think, That the quickening grace of the Spirit, and whatſoever elſe on Gods part is required to the converſion of a man, is communicated as well to the Reprobate, as to the Elect, and that with intention of their ſalvation, otherwiſe God ſhould deale deceitfully and hypocritically with them when he offers the Word unto them. Let their own words be read, *Coll. Hag.* p. 308. But we hold, That the quickning grace of God, which is fit for the healing and renewing of the Will, is peculiar to the Elect, and is imparted to them by vertue of the divine Decree, to the end they might be ſaved: But 'tis denyed to others, and that our God hath not determined to ſave them

5. They ſay, That the Will ſtirred up by quickning grace, may act or not act, turne to God or not; but otherwiſe it were not free: for they hold liberty to ſtand in this, That granting all things required, or all the actings of God, the Will may act or not, whence is that of *Corvinus* againſt *Tilenus*, pag. 337. Grace doth not ſo furniſh the Will with ſtrength, but that it alwayes remaines in the power of the Will to uſe it or not uſe it. We, on the contrary, ſay, That the VVill cannot reſiſt or withſtand the reall motion proceeding from Grace, nor the divine perſwaſion offered to it by an enlightened underſtanding, but doth neceſſarily follow the guidance of God, according to that of S. *Auguſtine*, *Free-will cannot reſiſt God in the work of ſalvation.*

6. They ſay, That the Will excited by Grace doth properly work together with God, is a co-ordinate joynt-cauſe, a partial Concomitant-cauſe, and hath ſuch an influence into the effect, that if it be withheld, the effect in no wiſe can follow. We, on the contrary, ſay, That the Will, indeed, doth co-operate, but as a cauſe every way ſubordinate and wholly ſubject to the dominion

nion of God as the principall agent, insomuch that it cannot properly be called a co-worker; but rather it acts as it is acted, move as it is moved, and being first turned into God, it turnes it selfe unto God.

7. They defend, That God cannot convert us in an irresistible way, unless we be turned into stocks and blocks, and so being driven with a continuall motion, we act nothing, but God all in us. On the other side, we say, that stocks and stones have no power to act, being acted; but that men are free Agents, and therefore have a power by vertue of which they act, being acted by God, and therefore may be said truly to act, and turne themselves; for the will being changed from evill unto good, and of unwilling made willing, hath in it selfe an inward principle of willing well; from whence the dominion of its owne act, whereby it turnes unto God, may properly be given unto it; for although the grace of God is the principle by which, yet the will of man is the principle which worketh all. In like manner, although God be the first and totall efficient cause of conversion, yet the Will is the next efficient cause, and totall also in the kinde of second causes; therefore, as the effects are wont to be attributed unto second and created causes, although they act by vertue of the first cause, so conversion is most properly to be attributed unto the Will, although it act wholly in the strength of God and converting Grace.

8 Lastly, They deny, That the unresistibleness of divine Grace, and the liberty of mans Will, can stand together. But we say, That Conversion is irresistible, and yet free. But we distinguish concerning the irresistibleness of Grace.

1. There is one kinde of Irresistibleness, whereby regenerating Grace infused from God, is received by the Will; and this irresistibleness of reception, we confesse, cannot stand with liberty

2. There is another kind, whereby the inclination putting on to spiritual good doth flow from, after a physicall or reall manner, from the Will fashioned by Grace: and this motion (we say) comes from the Will irresistibly and voluntarily, but not freely.

3. There is an Irreſiſtibleneſſe, whereby the Will aſſents unto this Phyſicall motion proceeding from Grace, as alſo to the perſwaſion of the Underſtanding, approving of it, and that neceſſarily or certainely: And this kinde of Irreſiſtibleneſſe, we ſay, may very well ſtand with Liberty, becauſe it comprehends in it ſelfe thoſe two things in which Liberty ſtands.

1. That the Will in putting forth this laſt act of willing, is active, and not paſſive.

2. Becauſe the morall perſwaſion, or judgement of the Underſtanding, thinking that the converſion propounded, that is, either the taking or refuſing the object offered, is in the power of man, hath gone before. For we hold, That whatſoever is done in the act of Converſion, either by a meere Reception, or by a phyſicall (or powerfull) Determination, is not free. But that every willing is only ſo far free as it is produced in an active way, and flowes from a reaſonable perſwaſion; and that upon this ground, that reaſon lies indifferent to things oppoſite, that is, Reaſon onely is the root and foundation of all Liberty: from whence it followes, that every act of the Will, into which Reaſon hath its influence, is moſt free.

You ſee now what our opinon is, which we have beene the longer in opening, becauſe the explication of it is its chiefe confirmation, and the confutation of the contrary. Beſides, it is a very difficult thing to expreſſe what the *Arminians* hold in this diſpute, becauſe they cover and wrap up their opinion in ſo doubtfull and ſpecious words.

There yet remaine the Arguments, by which our opinion is ſo to be confirmed, which I ſhall be brief in: Two things are to be proved:

1. That qualityes or habits may be infuſed into the Will, which they deny, becauſe they ſuppoſe, that ſuch an infuſion doth utterly deſtroy and take away the nature and liberty of the Will.

2. That this habituall and quickning Grace, being thus infuſed, we are converted by God in a certaine way, and by us irreſiſtible.

Arg. 1. That there is ſuch an infuſion of Grace renewing and

and healing the Will, inclining and determining it to one of the two oppoſites in the act of Converſion, appears by this, That all Divines hold, that there is in the Will an habituall averſion from God, and an habituall turning to ſenſible and carnall things: But this habituall corruption of nature cannot be healed by the ſole help of Grace, meerely exciting: For, as corporall, ſo ſpirituall diſeaſes are not cured, but by contraries; and therefore habituall corruption cannot be changed but by an habitual quality, imprinted on the Will. *Proſp.* therefore ſaith right, *The inward ſenſe is not opened to doe ſpirituall things, untill the foundation of Faith, and fervour of Love is planted in the Heart.*

2. Unleſſe it be granted, That ſuch an habituall Grace is infuſed into the Will, by which it is inclined to good after a phyſicall manner; there will be found no formall principle in man, from whence good acts may be produced: for as in corporall things no man ſees, unleſſe he firſt have eyes; nor heares, unleſs he hath eares: ſo in ſpirituall things, no man ſees unleſſe God hath firſt given him eyes to ſee; nor hears, unleſſe he hath given him eares to heare. By the ſame reaſon no man can turne himſelfe to God, unleſſe he have a new Heart; that is, a new Will to turne and love God: For what meanes that Scripture, *An evil Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit, a good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit?* But that we ſhould thereby underſtand, that the Will muſt firſt be made good, before it can performe any ſpirituall work, which muſt neceſſarily be done, not by exciting or perſwading Grace, but by Grace healing and regenerating.

3. Let it be ſuppoſed, that the Will deformed by habituall corruption, could, by the meere help of exciting Grace, be raiſed to the putting forth of ſpirituall acts: Yet would this be contrary to that ſweetneſſe of Divine Providence, which is acknowledged by all Divines: For God ſhould not ſweetly put forward the Will ſo diſpoſed, but in a forced way hurry it on to its work, which its own inclination is yet averſe from. It is therefore more meet, to place in the Will a certaine habituall Propenſion unto ſpirituall good, which it may performe, not by vertue of exciting grace, but from the infuſion of habitual grace.

4. It is confeſſed by all, that the Will unrenewed hath no principle in it truly ſpirituall; and yet they will not deny, that this act of turning unto God, is truly ſpirituall and ſupernaturall, but how the Will, onely excited by motioning Grace, and not changed by Grace regenerating, ſhould be placed in the rank of ſupernaturall agents, I underſtand not.

5. I will aske what is that which makes a man truly holy and Godly, not ſimply acts good and godly; for (as the Philoſopher ſayes) *Acts doe not denominate the ſubject to be ſuch:* it muſt therefore be ſome habit, by vertue of which a man is called godly and holy: But that habit is not placed in the irrationall part of the ſoule, for that is not properly capable of Vertue or Vice, but onely by Participation; to wit, ſo farre as the rationall part of the ſoule redounds upon it. But if it muſt be placed in the rationall part, it muſt not be in the underſtanding; for no man is good or evill, onely becauſe he underſtandeth good and evill things (as *Aquinas* very well obſerves) but therefore is one called a good or evill man, becauſe he wills thoſe things which are good and evill. It remaineth therefore, that the habit of holineſſe cannot be placed any where but in the will, as being the ſubject moſt properly capable, both of habituall holineſſe, as alſo of habituall corruption and rebellion, which is contrary thereunto.

6. If the Will be indifferent in it ſelfe, and equally inclined unto either part; whence is that facility and promptitude in working? for as by evil actions the Will contracts a ſtain whereby it is habitually diſpoſed unto evill; ſo by good actions the ſoule is touched with a better tincture, whereby it is habitually inclined unto good, and that ſetting aſide the operation of moving and exciting Grace.

7. All Divines of better note acknowledge, That charity, or the love of God, is not a meere act, but a permanent habit; but that habit hath no place in the underſtanding, becauſe it is an affection; nor in the ſenſitive appetite, which cannot be raiſed to ſpirituall love. It remaineth therefore, that it be peculiar to the Will, and ſo the Will to be moſt properly capable of habits, and of habituall Grace.

8. Laſtly

8. Laſtly, How abſurd is it to grant the whole man to be dead in ſinne, ſo that it can no way reach unto any good truly ſpirituall: and yet to defend, that the Will, which is the very leader of the ſoule, the driver of all faculties, the Lady and Queene of humane acts, and that principle, which impaireth ſpirituall good or evill, unto all actions which men performe. How abſurd (I ſay) is it, to hold that this faculty was neither ſpirituall before the Fall, nor carnall after the Fall, but to be utterly void, both of the corruption brought in by the firſt fault, and of ſpirituall gifts infuſed in the regeneration of man.

It were eaſie to overwhelme this Opinion with more abſurdities; but theſe ſhall ſuffice. By all theſe things it is apparent enough, that a new quality or habit of grace is infuſed into, or impreſſed upon the Will, which is earneſtly denyed by the *Arminians*, as hath been before proved by their own words.

But who ſo yet doubts whether this be their Opinion, let him read the *Hague Conference*, pag. 298. of *Bertius* Tranſlation; where they do induſtriouſly and purpoſely defend, that in ſpirituall death, ſpiritual gifts are not ſeparated from the will of man, neither were implanted in it before that death in the ſtate of Innocency, becauſe if by theſe kinde of gifts the will were inclined unto either part, the liberty of it were taken away, which (they ſay) conſiſts in this, That it can equally bend it ſelf to either part, when all requiſites unto action are afforded.

It remaines now briefly to be proved, that God, whether immediately or mediately, both by infuſed grace and morall perſwaſion, turneth ſinners unto himſelfe after an irreſiſtible manner. But this caution is to be premiſed, that by the word *Irreſiſtibly* we doe not underſtand any force offered to the Will, which is repugnant to its nature, but onely an inſuperable efficacy of Divine Grace, which inclines the Will ſweetly and agreeably to its owne nature, but ſo certainely and neceſſarily (we underſtand that Neceſſity, which even now we called Certainty) that it cannot be put off by the Will.

1. The truth of this Opinion is manifeſt from hence, That every where in Scripture the converſion and regeneration of a ſinner is attributed to God alone, and to his good will and pleaſure; but every, even the leaſt co-operation is taken away

from man himſelfe. *Rom.*9. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy. Hee hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth: which could not be truly ſaid, if a man at his owne freedome and pleaſure, allowing all the actions of God requiſite to converſion, might receive the quickning grace of God in vaine, and make it void (as *Arminius* ſpeaks.) And let it be obſerved from theſe words, *That this mans repenting, and that mans hardening, is not only attributed to God alone, but the will and endeavours of man, is utterly excluded from having any part in this buſineſſe.* It is not (ſaith the Apoſtle) *of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth*, &c. As the wheele doth not run well, that it may be round; but becauſe it is firſt round: ſo a man doth not therefore will or run that God might have mercy on him, and regenerate him by the quickning grace of the ſpirit: but becauſe God firſt hath mercy, therefore he willeth and runneth in the way of righteouſneſſe.

2. The ſecond reaſon is taken from the infallible connexion of the Effect, with the Cauſe; that is, of Converſion, with converting and quickning Grace: For if this quickning Grace alwayes attaine its effect, neither is offered to any, but thoſe in whom it is effectuall, to the healing and regenerating of their ſoule: we muſt neceſſarily attribute unto it a certaine, prevalent and irreſiſtible working. But it appeares by many places of Scripture, that this grace doth alwayes attain its end in thoſe to whom it is communicated. *Iohn* 6. 37. *Whatſoever my Father giveth me cometh unto me.* Jer. 31. 23. *Turn thou me and I ſhall be turned.* From whence it is gathered, That into whomſoever grace, fit for the converſion of a man, is infuſed, that man is certainly and infallibly converted; otherwiſe a man could not thus addreſſe to God. *Turne me*; that is, doe what thou art wont to doe by the help of thy Spirit, and the infuſion of thy Grace, and I ſhall be converted, for perhaps the will, in whoſe power it is to receive or reject grace, may make it void. The ſame is evident from *Iohn* 6.45. *Whoſoever hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me*; that is, whoſoever hath ſo *heard* and beene *taught of God*, that he hath alſo received and drunk in the quickning Grace of the Spirit, he hath certainly come unto mee.

Whence

Whence it appeares, That Grace fit for the converſion of a man is never fruſtrated, but it attaines its effect after an inſuperable manner, ſo that it can never be put off by the will of man: Which is further confirmed from the nature of Grace, and that powerfull manner, whereby God infuſeth it into the heart of man: For if Grace be the effect of infinite power (as it is) and that man be regenerated by the ſame power wherewith Chriſt was raiſed from the dead; then God in the implant ng of it in the will of man, puts forth that almighty power, which no created faculty is able to withſtand or reſiſt.

3. This Argument may alſo be added, The grace of God is ſo the efficient cauſe of Converſion, that it admits no joyn'd and co-ordinate cauſe, although it hath a ſubordinate cauſe; to wit, the will of man adjoyned to it: But if the Will, when it is excited by aſſiſting grace (as they call it) can reſiſt it, then it may alſo aſſiſt it; if it may withſtand it, then it may alſo joyn endeavour with it, to produce the ſame effect; if it can make it void, it may alſo make it effectuall, and ſo may be a cauſe co-ordinate with the grace of God, in bringing forth the firſt act of its converſion. But that God doth convert or regenerate men by his owne and onely work, excluding all co-ordinate cauſes, is ſo cleare, that it need not be proved; for it is frequently found in Scripture, The Lord converteth, the Lord gives repentance; that God circumciſeth, and takes away the ſtony heart, and gives a heart of fleſh.

Laſtly, That God doth regenerate, and by his owne power raiſe from the death of ſin.

I let paſſe the force of the ſimilitude, as no man can contribute any thing to his owne generation or reſurrection; ſo neither to his ſpirituall regeneration or reſurrection. God (I ſay) doth all theſe things; but they could not be attributed to him alone, if he had any cauſe ſo co-operating with him, as that if it refuſed, no ſuch effect could follow.

I adde, that of the Schoole-men is moſt true, That God is the cauſe of the whole Being; that is, although God be not the efficient cauſe of ſinne (which is not a being, but rather a defect of what ſhould be in a faculty or act) but rather a deficient will: but of every good work (of which kinde our firſt converſi-

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ſion is a chiefe one) if it be moſt full of Being, or if it be a whole Being, as it is, of ſuch a whole work; I ſay, it is neceſſary that God ſhould be the cauſe; for God alone is the cauſe of the whole Being whereſoever it is found: Yea, all Divines acknowledge, that ſo farre as Sinne it ſelfe is a Being, God is the cauſe of it: Wherefore, although the Will be the ſecondary and ſubordinate efficient cauſe of converſion; from whence it is that the Scriptures doe exhort us to turne our ſelves, and circumciſe our hearts, and ſo forth. Yet, as a co-ordinate cauſe, it no way can reſiſt the quickning grace of God, and receive it in vaine (as *Arminius* ſpeaks.) I adde, although God would admit of a Partner in this work, yet the will, which is wholly depraved and dead in ſinne, can no more co-operate with exciting and moving grace, than a carkaſſe prepared and diſpoſed by rubbing can revive it ſelfe, and put forth vitall acts. But, that I may conclude this reaſon, Let it be ſuppoſed, that the Will may work together with the grace of God, or not according to its liberty: yet, if this opinion ſtand, how much more than is meet will bee arrogated unto man, and derogated from the glory of God? Man may well boaſt that his will contributed ſo much to regeneration, that if he had not willed, it had never been produced. For as he, who being admoniſhed by another, gives an almes, doth attribute the work more to himſelfe, than to him that perſwaded him, or ſtirred him up to it; ſo he, whoſe will being onely moved or admoniſhed by aſſiſting grace, turnes it ſelfe unto God; doth more, or, at leaſt, equally aſcribes his converſion to himſelfe than to Divine Grace, which had never produced that effect, unleſſe he himſelfe had conſented unto it, and made its perſwaſions effectuall, whereas it was in his power to have rendred them fruſtrate.

The fourth reaſon is taken from hence, That the Decree of Election (by which God determined with himſelfe to ſave ſome perſons ſelected from the common Maſſe) is abſolute, and therefore doth neceſſarily and infallibly attaine its effect, That the Decree of Election is abſolute, ſo that the Lord looked upon nothing foreſeen in the perſons choſen, but abſolutely decreed to work in them all conditions required to ſalvation, is ſo cleare, manifeſt from many places of Scripture, that it ſcarce needs

needes any proof; for if we chuſe not God, but he us, *Joh.*15. if we are choſen that we might be holy, not holy that we might be choſen: If he choſe *Jacob* rather than *Eſau*, when both were of like and equall condition. *Rom.* 9. If effectuall vocation and juſtifying faith are the fruits and effects of predeſtination, not the foregoing conditions. *Rom.*8. Laſtly, If Gods meer good pleaſure be the onely reaſon of the Decree [He hath mercy on whom he will, and hardeneth whom he will.] It neceſſarily followes, that God hath abſolutely decreed to ſave ſome; and to that purpoſe to beſtow upon them Grace, Faith, and Holineſſe. Granting theſe things, it appeares, that God converts all the Elect after a manner, by them irreſiſtible on this manner, Becauſe if they could reſiſt that Grace, which is fit to convert them, being alſo given to this end, that they might be converted; then this abſolute and peremptory Decree of God might be diſappointed by the creature, which muſt not be imagined: Neither is there ground that they ſhould now object, that by the ſame reaſon thoſe whom God hath rejected, do ſinne irreſiſtibly. For we deny that there is the ſame reaſon of both: for although Faith be the effect of predeſtination, yet infidelity is not the proper effect of Reprobation. Whereas Faith requires a cauſe of it ſelfe efficient, which hath a true and proper influence into its effect. But there is no efficient cauſe required to unbeliefe; but deficient (becauſe it followes upon the meere defect and abſence of that cauſe by which Faith ſhould be wrought.) As to the illumination of the aire; there is required the Sun or ſome other efficient cauſe, having influence into that effect; but the abſence of the Sunne is enough to cauſe darkneſſe. In like manner, although the ſinnes of Reprobates do infallibly follow from the determinate counſell of God, who hath decreed their event; yet Converſion and Faith doe follow the abſolute Decree of God after a much different manner; ſinnes do follow infallibly indeed, but onely by a neceſſity of conſequence; that is, God not at all cauſing or effecting, but onely permitting: but Faith and good Works follow by a neceſſity of the conſequent, as of which God muſt moſt properly be called the Author, according to all Divines: For no man ever ſaid that men did believe, were regenerate, and turned to God; did good works (God onely

permitting, but cauſing and working. But if this be granted to us (as needs it muſt) that Faith and Converſion do follow the abſolute decree of God by a neceſſity of the conſequent, that is, a neceſſity cauſing and co-working: I ſee not how it can be denyed, that it is wrought in us after an irreſiſtible manner. For when any Agent ſo worketh upon the patient, that it neceſſarily overcomes it, it is properly ſaid to work irreſiſtibly. In like manner God, if he ſo convert a ſinner, that he is neceſſarily Converted, by a neceſſity of the conſequent then he converts it irreſiſtibly, that is after ſuch a manner, as the patient muſt needs ye ld; from whence I wonder, that thoſe who deny election, to depend on foreſeen faith, doe yet defend that converſion is wrought after a reſiſtible manner, and ſo as it may be fruſtrated.

Let this be the fiſt and laſt reaſon. If converſion be wrought after that reſiſtible manner, as is deſcribed by them who follow *Arminius*, then Divine election cannot be certaine according to their principles, becauſe it dependeth on the mutable will of man, which as it is deſcribed by *Arminius*, I dare ſay, could not be foreſeene by God himſelfe; for let it be ſuppoſed (which they lay) as the foundation of that *previſion* that God doth perfectly foreſee all the wayes whereby the will may be turned aſide, or inclined unto good: Let it alſo be ſuppoſed that God fore-knowes all objects, or circumſtances, which may any way be offered or propoſed to the will. Laſtly, let it alſo be ſuppoſed, that God doth perfectly know how every object or circumſtance is fit to move the will, and drive it this way, or that way, by perſwaſion. Yet if this be the condition of the will, that allowing any objects, yea further, allowing any fitneſſe in theſe objects or circumſtances, to incline the will this way, or that way; it may yet, by vertue of its intrinſecall liberty act, or not act, I ſee not how God can foreſee what the will certainly and infallibly will doe, that is, whether it will turne to God or not. Not that God, by reaſon of any impotency is not able to ſearch out what the will ſhall endeavour, but becauſe the thing it ſelfe is not knowable. For there cannot be greater certainty in the knowledge than in the object, from whence I thus reaſon. If it be certaine that the will ſhall aſſent unto grace offered, then it

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is falſly ſaid, that the Will ſuppoſing all the actions of God that are requiſite, may turne it ſelfe, or not? On the other ſide; if it be uncertaine, whether the will ſhall reſiſt this grace; or not, then that foreknowledge which God hath of it, cannot be certaine, for that which is to be knowne is the meaſure of knowledge, and therefore it is a contradiction to ſay, that the knowledge is true, and yet there is more certainty in the knowledge than in the thing knowne. As it implyes a contradiction to ſay, that the thing meaſured is greater or leſſe then the meaſure, and yet to be equall to it; I adde, although it be true, that God knowes all the wayes, according to which, the will may be well or ill inclined. Yet if the will be altogether undetermined, admitting nothing to determine it, neither within it ſelfe, nor without it, whether created, or uncreated, as they defend, implyes a contradiction, that any certaine way, whereby it ſhould fall out that the will ſhould be ordered or diſordered, can be determined by God himſelfe. Out of all theſe things it is gathered, that if converting grace move the will after a manner, that may be reſiſted by it, God cannot infallibly foreknow, who ſhall believe, and who not; and conſequently, all election ſhould be utterly taken away. Therefore it remaines,

That converting grace is both imparted by God, and received by us, after a manner Irreſiſtible.

FINIS.
